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**1996/12/10**

(Translation)

**Speech by General Chi Haotian  
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at the National Defence University of the United States**

The Honorable General Rokke,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon! I am very pleased to come to your beautiful campus. For many years, despite the ups and downs in China-U.S. relations, the two National Defence Universities have managed to maintain their communication, which has contributed positively to closer understanding between the two military forces and the improvement and growth of military-to-military ties. This is indeed very reassuring.

I have come here at an important moment in our relationship. Not long ago, President Jiang Zemin and President Clinton held a successful meeting in Manila. That meeting was of great significance, for it was a meeting of reviewing the past and looking into the future and laid a good foundation for the establishment of a 21st-century-oriented relationship between China and the U.S.. At present, there exists favorable opportunity for our two countries and two militaries to improve and develop their relations. My current visit is aimed precisely at working with Secretary Perry to reactivate the process which we two set in motion when he visited China in October 1994. My visit also signifies a new beginning in the relations between our two militaries. I am convinced that, so long as we make concerted efforts in the spirit of equality and consultation, our military-to-military ties will continue to move forward and give positive impetus to the improvement and growth of relations between the two countries.

Your university is the top military academy in the U.S. and the cradle for generals. As a veteran soldier, I wish to take this opportunity to exchange views with you on issues of mutual interest.

To begin with, I would like to share with you some of my observations on the current world situation. With only three years to go before the 20th century ends, mankind is about to cross the threshold of another millennium, bringing what we accomplished in the past into the future. At this turn of the century, we can see a world that is caught in profound and complex changes; profound because such changes touch upon the fundamental question of "where the world is headed for?" and complex because they involve the readjustment of interrelations between various forces in the world. This is a time of difficulties and challenges on the one hand and opportunities and hopes on the other. At present, the international situation as a whole is moving towards relaxation and the trend towards a multipolar world is accelerating. To maintain world peace and promote economic development has become the shared desire of all peoples. However, the world is no tranquil haven, but a place fraught with deep-rooted clashes of interests, with some regions reeling in conflicts and chaos. Facts have proved that peace and development remain the two major themes of the present-day world, yet both fall short of being satisfactorily addressed. Although mankind aspires peace, the time of peace remains elusive. Although economic development has become a universal desire, development around the world still comes under interferences of one way or another. In my view, a lasting peace and brisk development in the world still calls for close attention and unremitting efforts by statesmen and people of all countries.

Both China and the U.S. are major powers in Asia-Pacific and have a keen interest in what happens in this region. At present, when international relations are undergoing tremendous changes, the Asia-Pacific region as a whole has maintained stability. However, destabilizing factors, both immediate and potential, still exist and should not be overlooked. The Chinese Government and people are fully aware that China's economic growth and political stability is an important factor for a prosperous and stable Asia-Pacific, which, in turn, creates a favorable external environment for China's economic development. The Chinese Government and people have made and will continue to make positive efforts to promote peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region.

Now, I want to discuss in greater detail China's defence policy. I know this is also a question of interest to you. If I could summarize the topic in one sentence, that will be: China is a developing socialist country; the

nature of its social system and its national security interests determine that it follows a defensive defence policy. Such defence policy includes mainly the following:

First, the basic goal of China's defence policy is to consolidate national defence, resist foreign aggression, safeguard state sovereignty over territorial land, air and waters and maritime rights and interests and maintain national unity and security. It is also a principal mandate bestowed on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) by China's current Constitution which was promulgated in 1982. The PLA follows a strategy of "active defence". That is, a principle of defence, self-defence and striking only after being attacked is followed at the strategic level. Yet this defence is an active one, not a passive one that will often land the forces in a disadvantageous position.

Second, a basic principle for China's defence construction is to subordinate it to, and serve, the country's overall economic program. China has persisted in incorporating defence construction in the overall economic planning of the nation, so that they will meet the needs of both peace time and war time, both civilian use and military use and both immediate and long-term interests. To subordinate to and serve economic development, China has for years maintained a tight control on its defence expenditure. Since the beginning of the 1980s, though the absolute size of defence appropriations has somewhat increased over the years, its share in both GNP and state budget has actually shrunk. In 1996, China's defence budget was 70.227 billion RMB yuan, or equivalent of about 8 billion U.S. dollars. Considering the fact that China has the largest population and the third largest territory in the world and that it has a land boundary of over 20,000 kilometers and a coastline of 18,000 kilometers to defend, it is fair to say that its military expenditure is indeed very modest and for defensive purposes only.

Third, the focus of the military work in China is to build a better force with Chinese characteristics. PLA is required to be a force with a high political standard, high military capability, a fine style of work, strict discipline and strong logistic support. Since 1975, the Chinese military has gone through several rounds of streamlining, reorganization and restructuring, downsizing troops from over 6 million to less than 3 million today. As for weapon and equipment development, we have, in actively

implementing our military strategy of active defence, relied mainly on ourselves in research and development, supplemented by appropriate import. The modernization level of the weaponry and equipment of the Chinese military is still very low. Constrained by limited national strength, we can only improve gradually as our national economy becomes stronger.

Fourth, an important component of China's defence policy is to commit to world peace and human progress. Pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, China does not enter into alliance with any country or group of countries, nor does it participate in any military blocs. It is opposed to any form of hegemonism, power politics and acts of aggression and expansion. It stands for peaceful settlement of differences and disputes between countries through consultations, and against use or threat of force. China has all along stood for effective disarmament and arms control on a fair, reasonable, comprehensive and balanced basis while actively participating in relevant international disarmament and arms control talks and earnestly fulfilling its obligations under the treaties it has signed. To date, China is the only nuclear power that has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances and unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states. China has also actively participated in UN peace-keeping operations, making a positive contribution to world peace and stability.

China pursues a defence policy that is defensive in nature. This is out of the need for safeguarding state sovereignty and territorial integrity and maintaining lasting peace and stability for the country. China has never invaded any country, nor has it stationed a single soldier abroad. However, there are still some people around the world who keep spreading the fallacy of "China threat", arguing that a stronger China will threaten others and become a destabilizing factor in the Asia-Pacific region. I believe these people have ulterior motives. They are not happy to see China in development and progress. As is known to all, China's modern history is one that saw its territories ceded and its people subjected to foreign aggression, plunder and enslavement. In more than one century from the Opium War in 1840 to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, imperialist powers, on several occasions, invaded China or turned it into their own battleground, nibbling away and seizing millions of square kilometers of Chinese territory. Even today, China's Hong Kong and Macao still await to be recovered. And Taiwan, for reasons known to all, remains

in a state of separation from the rest of the country after its return to China. As an old soldier who went through the winds of war in the first half of this century, I am keenly aware of the deep scars that agonizing chapter has left on the hearts and minds of our people. It teaches us that to live a peaceful, tranquil and dignified life, our people must have a capability to defend themselves. It teaches us that the miseries the Chinese people went through in recent past must not be repeated either in China or in any other part of the world. Peace should be enjoyed by people of all countries. Even if China becomes stronger in the future, it will never embark on external aggression and expansion.

China has always attached importance to China-U.S. relations, believing that a stable and sound China-U.S. relationship not only serves the fundamental interests of the two peoples but also contributes to world peace and stability. Our bilateral relations have zigzagged in recent years. It is not surprising for us to have some disagreements, given our differences in economic development level, social and political system, cultural tradition and value judgment. Practice has proved that as long as our two sides bear in mind the fundamental interests of the two countries and adopt a correct attitude of consultations on equal footing and mutual respect, in the spirit of "enhancing confidence, reducing trouble, developing cooperation and avoiding confrontation", we will be able to gradually iron out the specific problems in our bilateral relations.

Here, I feel compelled to mention the Taiwan question, an issue that is the key to and at heart of whether China-U.S. relations can be stable and grow stronger. Settling the Taiwan question is China's internal affair. The position of the Chinese Government in this regard can be summed up as "peaceful reunification based on one country, two systems". We hope to see a peaceful settlement yet refuse to renounce the use of force. This policy is a result of careful consideration. The marked improvement in the relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits in recent years accords with the common interests of the people on both sides. It also contributes to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific and serves the interests of the United States as well. However, the Taiwan authorities have, in disregard of the overall interests of the Chinese nation, gone farther and farther down the road of conniving at and participating in activities aimed at splitting the motherland, which caused tension in cross-Straits relations. I would like to point out here that if those elements on the Island who are eager to see China

dismembered and themselves becoming more important with foreign support should cling to their wrong course and slip further astray, the Chinese Government and people will not sit idle by. The entire Chinese history shows that whoever splits the motherland will end up condemned by history. Neither history nor the people will forgive him. The international relations in the Asia-Pacific since the end of World War II have also proved that the sole correct approach to avoiding tension in the region is to firmly oppose the separatist tendency and foreign meddling with the Taiwan question.

Frankly speaking, the Taiwan question should not have been a problem in today's China-U.S. relations. After the end of World War II, in accordance with the principle established by the Cairo Declaration and reaffirmed by the Potsdam Proclamation, Taiwan was restored to China. However, for reasons known to all, Taiwan has since been separated from the rest of China. In 1972, China and the U.S. issued the Shanghai Communiqué which was followed by the Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and the August 17 Communiqué. In all these three Communiqués which constitute the foundation of China-U.S. relations, the U.S. Government recognized in clear terms that there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China; that the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government of China and within this context the U.S. will only maintain unofficial relations with Taiwan; and that the U.S. will not seek to pursue a long-term policy of arms sale to Taiwan and its sale of arms will be gradually reduced and eventually stop. The U.S. Government has also on many occasions made it clear that it is up to the Chinese on both sides of the Straits to settle the Taiwan question. We hope that the U.S. Government can keep its promise. Facts over the years have repeatedly shown that when the Taiwan question is handled properly, China-U.S. relations will fare well; conversely, the relations will fare rather badly with endless troubles. To put an end to the state of separation across the Taiwan Straits and fulfill the grand cause of national reunification is an unshakable will of all Chinese people, the people in Taiwan included. This is an important issue of principle that bears on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and directly touches the national sentiments of the Chinese people. I am confident that the American people, having experienced the Civil War themselves, should and will understand the resolve and determination of the Chinese people to safeguard state unity and oppose national separation.

As an old Chinese saying goes, one may extend his vision by standing on high ground. That is, the higher one stands, the farther he can see. It is our sincere hope that the U.S. Government may stand on a higher plane and get a broader view on the issue of Taiwan. The high ground here is to maintain and develop the friendship between the Chinese and American peoples by respecting the feelings of the Chinese people. The high ground here is also to maintain and develop China-U.S. cooperation and promote stability in the Asia-Pacific region by strictly observing the principles of the three China-U.S. Joint Communiques. In fact, we have never made any undue demand with the U.S. on the Taiwan question. Just as Mr. Deng Xiaoping put it during his visit to your country in 1979, there is nothing we want the U.S. to do, but something we want the U.S. not to do.

Your Honorable Gen. Rokke,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I left for my current visit, I received a book entitled "Pearl Harbor in Picture" from Admiral Preher. A famous epigram is inscribed in the book: Remember Pearl Harbor. Precisely four days ago was the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Pearl Harbor Incident. World War II bound China and the U.S. together in an earnest cooperation against their common enemy. I hope China-U.S. relations today can still reflect the spirit of that sound and positive cooperation. I hope in particular that the armed forces of the two countries will make a major contribution to the steady growth of China-U.S. relations.

Thank you.